

# THE HATFIELD MOUND: A RE-PUBLICATION OF A GREENE COUNTY ADENA MOUND EXCAVATION AND COMMENTS ON ADENA CULTURE STUDIES

by  
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Many professional archaeologists do not read, or are aware of, avocational or non-professional journals and the reports they contain. Thus, they often miss information which could illuminate the understanding of many Midwestern cultures. For this reason, a recap of the Hatfield mound excavation, published forty years ago, is presented here as an important addition to Adena studies.

## The Hatfield Mound

The Hatfield Mound was excavated in the summer of 1971 by a group of avocational archaeologists led by Dudley Bravard of Yellow Springs, Ohio. The excavation was done carefully and professionally. The results were published in the 1972 and 1975 issues of *Artifacts*, (Bravard 1972 - 1975). The *Artifacts* Society journal was not widely distributed throughout the archaeological community at that time but because of the importance of the Hatfield Mound, it is re-presented in this issue of the *Ohio Archaeologist* with permission of Dudley Bravard. This is not a verbatim report, but is a summary which includes new pictures of the pertinent parts of the excavation. It is hoped that re-reporting this important Adena mound will further stimulate research of one of Ohio's most important cultures. Comments and observations — and errors — are those of the present author and not Dudley Bravard.

## The Excavation

The Hatfield Mound is located north of Xenia, Greene County, Ohio, near what is known as "Oldtown" a place of great importance during the Indian wars in Ohio. Despite its location, the mound had nothing to do with the Indian wars.

Excavation began in June 1971 and continued until winter set in. The mound was slightly more than 3 feet high and 40 feet in diameter and nearly circular. A grid system was staked out and the mound laid out in five foot squares — a 10 inch wall being left between the grids.

Feature 1 was in the approximate center of the mound at a depth of around 20 inches. It was a single adult male burial — apparently placed sometime after the original mound had been built and perhaps in a second addition to the mound. It was placed with head pointed to the north and was lying on a layer of ashes, cracked rock and charcoal. No artifacts were found.

Feature 2 contained four adults about 15 inches deep on the natural floor of the mound. Two were oriented northeast and two southwest. With them were found a bone awl, a bone chisel, and two keyhole slate pendants — one broken.

Feature 3 was the burial of a child poorly preserved. With the burial were two Adena points.

## Comments on Adena Studies

Mills Archaeological Atlas of Ohio (Mills-

1913) indicates numerous burial mounds in southwest central Ohio. Greene County and adjacent counties — Clinton, Warren, Montgomery, and Clark are listed as having 339 mounds — Clinton has 93, Clark 47, Montgomery 76, Warren 62 and Greene 61. Madison and Fayette counties, which also abut Greene County, have relatively few artificial mounds — or at least those which have been recorded.

Most of these mounds are probably Adena and many of them have been excavated or dug into by antiquarians or curiosity seekers in the past two centuries. Few of them have been professionally excavated and those that have been are mostly unreported. The lack of reports of those excavations — scientific or otherwise — might be excused in the light of the multitude of "investigations" done in the 1800s and early 1900s which were apparently so common in those days that they provoked little more than passing interest by the public. Nonetheless, some excavations have been done in the area in the last sixty years under professional auspices but have never been published or even written. For example, important Adena mounds in Clinton County were investigated by Raymond Baby of the Ohio Historical Society but, other than a few brief lines in *Museum Echoes*, no reports were ever written.

In these days many professional reports are listed under the rubric "report on file" which is of little or no benefit to those who don't know about them or can't get copies of them. From what can be determined, some of these latter day excavations have only field notes — again inaccessible to the public — but which may contain evidence of crucial importance to the understanding of the Adena culture. (Today's "report on file" syndrome is little more than a way of avoiding peer review or criticism of what may be poor or shoddy archaeology. Who knows?)

The mounds excavated by the Ohio Historical Society in Clinton County and never reported, such as the Cowan Creek Mound, would undoubtedly have added valuable information to the understanding of Adena. Those excavations are mentioned, if at all, by only a few lines in the in-house OHS pamphlet *Museum Echoes*. These brief statements are the only record that today's researchers have of many OHS Adena mound excavations. The artifacts and field notes from these excavations are usually either off limits or beset with so many insurmountable access and research conditions that they are useless to outside researchers. Those who control access to them are apparently not interested in publishing them.

Today's Adena scholars theorize, argue, lament, lay blame, wonder, speculate, and model-build while trying to interpret the Adena culture. Few of them comment on the fact that not a single one of the two-score or more Adena mounds in the heart of Adena country excavated by the Ohio Historical Society (Converse —

2003) in the last sixty years has been published — nor likely ever will be.

An exception to this lack of verifiable information in Adena studies is the subject of this report ironically done by a non-professional.

Feature 4 was a cremation with no artifacts.

Feature 5 was the central feature of the mound. It was the burial of a 35 to 45 year old male at the approximate center of the mound in a sub-floor pit. It was well preserved. Red ochre covered the skull and long bones. Accompanying this burial were 235 marginella shell beads, one bone awl or hairpin, and a tubular blocked end pipe of Ohio pipestone. Two wolf jaw spatulas were found one on each side of the skull.

Feature 6 was a circular house pattern 24 feet in diameter of single burned post molds. On the east and west sides of this circle were burned areas two feet in diameter and 2 inches deep.

A stone celt was found in the mound fill.

**Recap.** The Hatfield Mound appears to be a typical early Adena mound built over a circular house pattern of single posts. A single male burial — for whom the mound was probably constructed — was placed in a sub-floor pit in the center of the mound. Ancillary multiple burials were placed away from the mound center and a shallow burial was placed above the central feature. Once in the mound's early history a new cap was added and probably two individuals were at that time buried.

Perhaps the most unusual and important feature of the Hatfield Mound are the wolf jaw spatulas which are among the rarest of all Adena artifacts. They were located on either side of the skull of the central burial approximately on the shoulders near the ears.

A similar spatula was found with a male burial at the Ayers Mound in Kentucky. The individual at Ayres was in his twenties and his front teeth had been removed to accommodate the spatula. In the Delmarva area of the East Coast, an Adena male burial with upper front teeth removed was discovered, however no spatula was found with him. So far as is known, Hatfield is the only mound where two spatulas were occurred. Strangely, the Hatfield individual did not have any of his teeth removed.

A few pot shards were in the mound. They were grit tempered and smooth and could be considered Fayette Thick.

In conclusion, the Hatfield Mound contained many features and artifacts typical of Early Adena mounds. The keyhole pendants, the tubular pipe, the wolf-jaw spatulas and thick grit tempered pottery are all artifacts which could be duplicated from other early Adena mounds.





Figure 1 (Converse) Scene of mound during excavation.

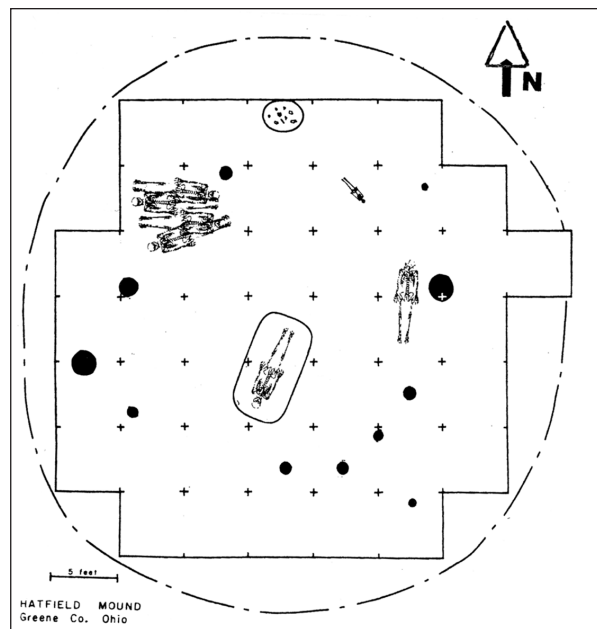


Figure 2 (Converse) Floor plan of Hatfield Mound.

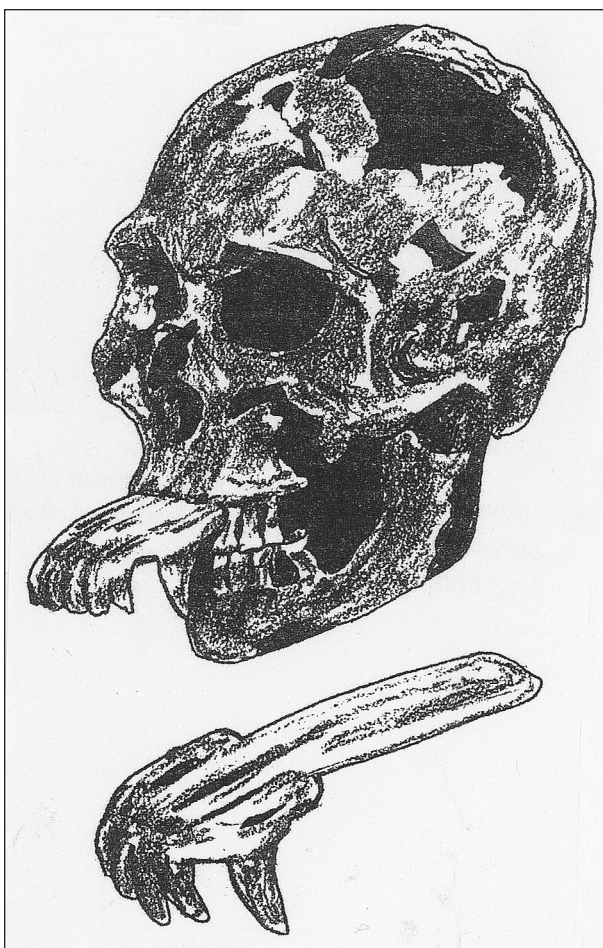


Figure 3 (Converse) Adena male from the Ayers Mound in Kentucky. The front teeth have been removed to accommodate a wolf jaw spatula. (Converse 2003).

Figure 4  
(Converse) Central  
sub-floor burial.  
Note tubular pipe  
on pelvis and spatulas  
at each side of skull.  
Leg bones were  
covered with  
red ocher.



Figure 5  
(Converse)  
Flint and  
bone artifacts.





Figure 6 (Converse) Two wolf jaw spatulas.



Figure 8 (Converse) Pair of Adena keyhole slate pendants.



Figure 7 (Converse) Blocked end tubular pipe.



Figure 9 (Converse) 235 marginella shell beads.